

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday February 4th 2001

Bill Orr W6SAI, Silent Key

Amateur radio is saddened to lose a great Elmer. William I. "Bill" Orr, W6SAI died in his sleep on January the 24th at the age of 81. He was a real hams ham and was always generous in sharing his knowledge. Orr was best known for his numerous amateur radio books and reference works, many aimed at beginners. His titles include The Radio Handbook, The Beam Antenna Handbook, The Quad Antenna Handbook, The VHF-UHF Manual and The W6SAI HF Antenna Handbook, some written in collaboration with Stu Cowan, W2LX. At least one of these books has a place of distinction on the bookshelf of almost every radio amateur worldwide. May he rest in peace.

South Dublin Radio Club

The Annual General Meeting of South Dublin Radio Club will take place on Tuesday the 13th February at 8.00 p.m. in the club's QTH at the Ballyroan Community Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham. All members are requested to attend.

A reminder that the Spring Challenge runs for the month of February. It is a challenge to HF operators to see how many DXCC countries they can work over a period of a month, in normal QSO mode. There are two sections - an open section (for all bands, all modes) and a restricted section (one band, CW only). You can find full details of the Spring Challenge on page 23 of the current IRTS Year Book. South Dublin Radio Club has very attractive trophies for the open and restricted sections, and these are presented to the winners at the IRTS Annual General Meeting.

Tipperary Amateur Radio Group

The next Tipperary Amateur Radio Group meeting will be held in the usual venue of Raheen House Hotel in Clonmel on Wednesday next the 7th of February at 8pm. Special guest at the meeting will be Dave Moore EI4BZ, president of the IRTS. This much anticipated visit will prove to be a memorable meeting with many of TRG 2001 initiatives becoming realised. All are welcome and all TRG members are requested to attend. Further updates on some of the TRG planned activities for 2001 in next week's IRTS news bulletin.

Most Tipperary Amateur Radio Group members are now equipped with both 2m and 70cm transmitters and would invite any amateurs passing through south Tipperary to call in to our local UHF or VHF frequencies of 145.450 MHz or indeed 434.450 MHz. These frequencies are very active from early morning to late at night. Also on 28.450 MHz FM and SSB TRG members operate daily and nightly skeds and again would invite other amateurs to call in.

Tory Island

Paddy EI7GK is planning to activate Tory Island Co. Donegal over the last weekend in February, weather permitting. He will be setting up a station at his daughter's QTH and will be QRV as EJ7GK on the WAI frequency 7,068MHz and on Island frequencies on 20 and 15 metres. He will also read Nuacht na Gaeilge on Sunday 25th from the island.

IRTS Awards

Nominations are requested by the Awards Manager Peter EI4HX for the following IRTS Awards:- ARUP cup, Collins Cup, Pat Conway Cup, Folan Shield, Sheila Piper Cup, and the Kevin Freeny Trophy. Applications are also invited for the EI7IQ 6 Metre Activity Awards. [See page 19 of the new 2001 Year Book]. New guidelines to apply for the Ian Morris Memorial (SWL) Trophy are being processed and will be announced soon! IRTS Committee Meeting The next committee meeting of the Irish Radio Transmitters Society will take place at 11.00 a.m. on Saturday the 24th of February in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel, Athlone.

DX News

Over the weekend of the 12th to the 14th of January, stations in Canada, the USA and Europe attempted the first two-way transatlantic contact on the 136kHz band. Although the two-way was not successful, the one-way distance record was broken in both directions. The new world distance record now stands at 5736 kilometres. G0MRF, who was the first station to cross the Atlantic on 136kHz, put up his antenna on an apartment block on the Sunday, but was hampered by high static levels and poor conditions that made that day's tests a washout at both ends. On the Saturday, however, several European stations received good signals from VE1ZZ and VA3LK. MM0ALM and OK1FIG were the only Europeans received in Canada. Extremely slow Morse was used by all stations to enable signals to be decoded well below the noise level. VE1ZZ was occasionally audible in the UK but the strength was not

sufficient to read normal speed Morse. The USA team, operating from North Carolina, heard a number of LF stations, but none from Europe.

AMSAT Oscar 40

The latest information on Oscar 40 suggests that the satellite might have suffered antenna system damage when it went silent on December the 13th last. AMSAT Germany's Peter Guelzow, DB2OS, reports that efforts to restart the 2-meter transmitter continue to be unsuccessful. DB2OS says that while the 2-metre, 70-centimetre and 23 centimetre receivers are all working on the high-gain antennas, none of them will work on the omni-directional antennas. It was speculated that either the omni-directional antennas, the cabling or antenna relays are damaged. On the bright side, it was reported that Oscar 40's attitude control system which is critical to keeping the satellite in orbit on a long-term basis is fully functional.

World Amateur Radio Day

April 18th is designated as World Amateur Radio Day. The IARU Administrative Council has announced the theme for World Amateur Radio Day 2001: "Providing Disaster Communications: Amateur Radio in the 21st Century." This event and this theme have been publicised in various news releases. It may be the time for radio amateurs to think about how we or our clubs can properly celebrate the day. A source of ideas for Promotional Material can be had from the New Zealand society NZART on their website at [www.nzart.org.nz/nzart/promo/promoting/promoting](http://www.nzart.org.nz/nzart/promo/promoting/promoting.html) .html. Members of the National Institute of Amateur Radio (NIAR) VU2NRO, Hyderabad have established HF/VHF stations in the earthquake affected areas of Gujarat to provide emergency relief communications to the Government. The main frequency is 14.160 MHz. The callsigns are VU2LIC, VU2MYH, VU2LFA, VU3RBN. Other local and out station Hams are also active. It is requested that all international amateur radio operators please stay clear of 14.160 MHz and 7.023 MHz until further notice.

Items for inclusion in Echo Ireland should be forwarded to Dave Moore EI4BZ at 021-4883555 in the evenings or at 021-4823172 during office hours. Items can be submitted to Dave by e-mail at ei4bz@eircom.net and you can fax him at 021-4823316.

Items for inclusion in the Radio News should be forwarded to Mark Wall EI7IS at QTHR or via e-mail to ei7is@qsl.net or cyberis@e-merge.ie. Items can also be sent to Mark over the phone at 087-6302026. News can also be submitted via e-mail to

news@irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both news services.

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